

RESOLUTION of the Cañada College Academic Senate to support student success and mental health, to uphold academic freedom in regard to the Israel-Gaza crisis, and to affirm the Associated Students of Cañada College in their statement of Solidarity for the People of Palestine.

WHEREAS Cañada College regards itself as a “student-centered institution, [putting] the needs of students first”<sup>1</sup>;

WHEREAS in April 2024 the Associated Students of Cañada College (ASCC) issued a statement of Solidarity for the People of Palestine “[demanding] that the administration of our campus breaks its silence on the humanitarian crisis and collective punishment of those in Gaza,” and asserting that they “stand together to amplify and strengthen student voices, condemning any form of racism, Islamophobia, or [anti-Semitism], while “[acknowledging] the Jewish community’s pain from the October 7, 2023 events and [empathizing] with all people suffering”<sup>2</sup>;

WHEREAS, more than 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals had been killed and 253 hostages taken as a result of Hamas’s October 7, 2023 attacks, of whom 98 are still being held, and as of April 15, 2024, more than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed as a result of the Israeli military operations in Gaza<sup>3 4</sup> and 3,500 Palestinians are being held without charge in Israeli prisons<sup>5</sup>;

WHEREAS our college prioritizes social justice and equity and strives to “provide equitable access and resources to students, staff, and faculty, in consideration of all their identities to ensure a community of support and successful educational outcomes;”<sup>6</sup> rates of anxiety and depression have increased among college students since 2020<sup>7 8</sup>; the students of the ASCC have indicated additional stress by “directly [expressing] their pain and anger”<sup>9</sup> since the conflict in Gaza began; and Black and Brown students have been triggered by the conflict because of their connections to the non-stop wars on the African continent and in South and Central America; but face-to-face personal counseling for Cañada College students remains unavailable three out of seven days per week including many evenings, Fridays, and weekends<sup>10</sup>;

WHEREAS the San Mateo Community College District’s “Statement on Academic Freedom” asserts that we are “dedicated to maintaining a climate of academic freedom encouraging the sharing and cultivation of a wide variety of viewpoints. Academic freedom expresses our belief in inquiry, informed debate and the search for truth; academic freedom is necessary in order to provide students with a variety of ideas, to encourage them to engage in critical thinking and to help them understand conflicting opinions. Academic freedom encompasses the freedom to

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<sup>1</sup> [Cañada College Mission, Vision, and Values: Student Centered](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Associated Students of Cañada college statement of solidarity for the people of Palestine](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Israel and Hamas Conflict In Brief: Overview, U.S. Policy, and Options for Congress](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Half a year into the war in Gaza, here’s a look at the conflict by the numbers](#)

<sup>5</sup> [What We Know About Palestinians Detained in Israel](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Cañada College Mission, Vision, and Values: Social Justice and Racial Equity](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Student mental health is in crisis. Campuses are rethinking their approach](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Student Mental Health Status Report: Struggles, Stressors and Supports](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Associated Students of Cañada college statement of solidarity for the people of Palestine](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Cañada Personal Counseling Center](#)

study, teach, and express ideas, including unpopular or controversial ones, without censorship or political restraint. Academic freedom, rather than being a license to do or say whatever one wishes, requires professional competence, open inquiry and rigorous attention to the pursuit of truth. The District's faculty have the right to express their informed opinions which relate, directly or indirectly, to their professional activities"<sup>11 12</sup>;

WHEREAS criticizing the policies of governments and their militaries are fundamental democratic rights<sup>13 14</sup>, and the 2020 Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA), distinguishes such criticism from anti-Semitism, which is "discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish)"<sup>15</sup>;

WHEREAS the US government is funding and arming the Israeli military<sup>16 17</sup>, recently passing a bill to provide Israel an additional \$26 billion (including \$9.1 billion for humanitarian needs)<sup>18</sup> and prioritizing U.S. military spending (\$825 billion)<sup>19</sup> over education (\$90.0 billion)<sup>20</sup>;

Therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Cañada College Academic Senate work with the college to develop and offer culturally responsive mental health support services for students, faculty, and staff who have been impacted by the events and the ongoing conflict, including our Palestinian, Palestinian-American, Israeli, Israeli-American, Jewish, Muslim, Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander, Black, and Brown students;

RESOLVED that the Cañada College Academic Senate affirms our commitment to the protection of academic freedom in online academic environments and on campus, despite calls to censor texts, discussion, and activism around the current conflict in Gaza and Israel;

RESOLVED that the Cañada College Academic Senate work with AFT1493 to protect academic and intellectual freedom including the rights of all faculty, adjunct and full-time, to develop curriculum, educational programming, and resources, and to discuss the current conflict in Gaza and Israel when directly or indirectly related to their professional activities such as in the classroom, in office hours, in counseling and library sessions, and at all campus activities, without being subjected to intimidation, censorship, retaliation, or threat of reduction or termination of employment or assignment;

RESOLVED that for humanitarian reasons and to support the mental health needs of our students, the Cañada College Academic Senate calls for an immediate reallocation of US taxpayer funds from military aid to Israel to the prevention of further loss of life, and to be

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<sup>11</sup> [Statement on Academic Freedom](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Board Policy 6.35 Academic Freedom](#)

<sup>13</sup> [The Bill of Rights](#)

<sup>14</sup> [BP 2.31 Speech: Time, Place and Manner](#)

<sup>15</sup> [The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#)

<sup>16</sup> [FACT SHEET: Memorandum of Understanding Reached with Israel](#)

<sup>17</sup> [U.S. floods arms into Israel despite mounting alarm over war's conduct](#)

<sup>18</sup> [US House passes \\$95 billion Ukraine, Israel aid package, sends to Senate](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Department of Defense Releases the President's Fiscal Year 2025 Defense Budget](#)

<sup>20</sup> [U.S. Department of Education Fiscal Year 2024 Budget](#)

invested in our nation's educational system to improve mental health services and promote student success.

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